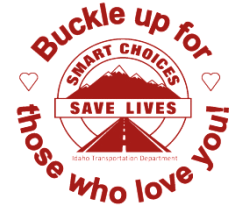




## The Cold Hard Facts Regarding Idaho's Seat Belt Law



The proposed change to the law would add court costs for adults that violate Idaho's seat belt law. The current inequity in the fine requires teen drivers under 18 years of age pay the court costs in addition to the ticket for a total of \$51.50, while the adult violators pay just \$10. The adult seat belt violation fine would still be less than the cost of a ticket for; broken headlight or taillight (\$52), expired license plates (\$52), failure to signal a lane change (\$75), failure to stop behind a stop line (\$75), or speeding 16 or more miles over the limit (\$140).

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### Funding Loss Results in Increased Costs

***Funding Decrease = Education & Enforcement Decrease = Belt Use Decrease = Traffic Crash Serious Injuries Increase = Cost to Idahoans Increase***

- **FUNDING** - Ineligible for federal seat belt incentive grant funds since 2006
  - Inequity of traffic fine structure (no court cost on adult ticket) is a contributor to funding ineligibility
- **EDUCATION** – reduced funding has reduced public education efforts
- **ENFORCEMENT** – \$10 tickets often do not change behavior and processing the tickets is not compensated by the violators
- **BELT USE** declined from 80% in 2006, to 77% in 2008
- **DEATHS** - Of the 187 passenger motor vehicle occupants killed in 2007, only 65 were using seat belts.
- **KILLED OR SERIOUSLY INJURED** – the number of unbelted killed and seriously injured increased from 500 in 2006 to 516 in 2007.
- **SERIOUS INJURIES** – in 2007, 402 unbelted Idahoans were critically injured in traffic crashes, decline from 384 in 2006.
- **COST** - Idahoans, *not the person involved in the crash*, pay 85% of the medical bills associated with car crashes through insurance, taxes, etc.

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### 10 Idaho Seat Belt Facts

1. Buckling up is FREE
2. Seat belts, when used, are the most effective safety feature ever introduced for vehicles, reducing the likelihood for fatal and serious injury crashes by half. ( Traffic Safety Facts 2003, NHTSA)
3. In 2007, the 22% of Idahoans that did not buckle up accounted for 65% of the people killed in traffic crashes.
  - Over 80% of people killed in DUI crashes - not buckled up.
  - 63% of those killed in speed-related crashes - not buckled up.
  - 76% of those killed in single vehicle rollovers – not buckled up.
4. In the last 5 years (2003-2007) 1,035 passenger motor vehicle occupants were killed in traffic crashes, 60% were unrestrained.
5. From 2003-2007, 69% of the passenger motor vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes were male and the average age of the unbelted killed was 36.
6. The Idaho State budget pays an estimated \$9 million in health care costs every year for traffic crash injuries which would have been prevented by seat belt use (*Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center*)
7. Idaho's seat belt law (\$10 fine for adults) is the weakest in the west and tied for the lowest fine in the country.
8. An estimated 11,800 people require emergency room care in Idaho for injuries that would have been prevented by seat belt use. (*Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center*)
9. In 2007, the economic impact to Idahoans for motorists killed or injured due to lack of seat belt use was \$861 million. (*ITD 2007 Crash Report*)
10. Wearing your seat belt is the law; Idaho Code 49-673 requires everyone in a vehicle be properly restrained.

## Fine Distribution

\$41.50 in court (admin) costs is paid for traffic tickets **except for adult seat belt tickets**. *Idaho Code 31-3201A*.

In 2007 there were about 22,000 seat belt citations written. About 1,000 were for the under-18 year old drivers so they would have had court costs attached. The rest were likely written without the court costs.

- \$16.50 Court Costs
  - \$5.00 District Court Fund
  - \$11.50 State Treasurer
    - \$9.89 General Fund (86%)
    - \$1.61 Peace Officer Standards and Training Fund (14%)
- \$ 5.00 County Justice Fund (Support court system)
- \$10.00 Peace Officer Standards Training Fund
- \$10.00 ISTARS fee (Idaho Statewide Trial Court Automated Records System)
- **\$41.50 TOTAL**

**The fixed fine for adults is \$10 while under-18 drivers pay the fixed fine plus court costs = \$51.50.**

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Seat belt incentive grant funds have been used to provide programs that increased seat belt use from 58% in 1999 to 80% in 2006. Idaho is no longer eligible for seat belt incentive grant funds and seat belt use is declining.

## **RESTRAINT USE IN IDAHO TRAFFIC CRASHES**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Idaho's Seat Belt Use Rate	58%	59%	60%	63%	72%	74%	76%	80%	78%	77%
Unbelted Fatalities	183	169	149	135	150	113	126	116	114	
Unbelted Seriously Injured	769	729	668	612	545	476	452	384	402	

Note that as seat belt use increased from 58% in 1999 to 80% in 2006, the number of unbelted seriously injured declined from 769 to 384. This is a 50% reduction in unbelted serious injuries. And unbelted deaths declined by 38%. Note also the steady decline over the years. These aren't just numbers. They are families impacted.

**"Lack of seat belt use impacts the effectiveness of everything we do to improve highway safety in Idaho."**

*Mary Hunter, ITD Highway Safety Manager*

For more information visit the following websites:

[www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs](http://www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs)

[www.buckleupidaho.org](http://www.buckleupidaho.org)